

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Applicant	: Larry Keith Bruening		
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Title	: CALL-ROUTING SYSTEM AND METHOD		
Group Art Unit	: 2614		
Examiner	: Thjuan Knowlin Addy		
Docket No.	: 2429/SPRI.106545		
Customer No.	: 32423		

VIA EFS – February 3, 2010

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Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

AMENDED APPEAL BRIEF

Dear Sir:

This is an Amended Appeal Brief submitted in response to the Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief dated January 20, 2010 having a one-month response period ending February 22, 2010 (February 20 falling on a Saturday). A correction of the statement of the status of all claims is included and the “Statement of Facts” section has been removed as required in the Notification. This is an Appeal from the Final Rejection dated November 25, 2008. Each of the claims has been at least twice rejected. A Notice of Appeal along with a Pre-Appeal Brief Request for Review and all of the proper fees were submitted on March 24, 2009. A Notice of Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Brief Review was mailed on September 9, 2009 resetting the time period for filing an appeal brief to October 9, 2009. No fee is believed due with this Amended Appeal Brief.

Contents follow.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is SPRINT COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY L.P., a limited partnership duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware, United States of America. The mailing address for purposes of this Appeal is 6391 Sprint Parkway, Overland Park, Kansas 66251-2100, “attention Melissa Jobe or Sally Werts.”

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

None.

III. STATEMENT OF JURISDICTION

The Board has jurisdiction under 35 U.S.C. § 134(a). The Examiner mailed a final rejection on November 25, 2008, setting a three-month shortened statutory period for response. The time for responding to the final rejection expired on February 25, 2009. 37 C.F.R. 1.134. A Notice of Appeal, petition and fee for a one month extension of time, and a Request for Pre-Appeal Brief Panel Review in accordance with the pilot program outlined in the Notice from the *Official Gazette* dated July 12, 2005 was filed on March 24, 2009. The time for filing an appeal brief is one month after mailing of the Panel decision regarding the Request. *See Notice*. The panel decision was mailed September 9, 2009. The period for reply with a one-month extension expires October 9, 2009. 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a). The appeal brief is being filed on October 9, 2009.

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V. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-5, 8-23, and 25-41 are rejected. Claims 8-12, 17, and 25-38, and 41 are the subject of this Appeal. Claims 6, 7, and 24 are cancelled.

VI. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

The after-final amendment submitted January 20, 2009, was denied entry on February 19, 2009.

VII. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Of claims 8-12, 17, and 25-38, and 41, claims 8, 28, 28, 32, and 41 are independent. The present invention is defined by the claims but, summarily, embodiments of the invention are directed to methods, systems, and computer-readable media for facilitating communications between parties by making use of an intermediary facilitator. *See Specification*, Abstract.

A. Independent Claim 8

Claim 8 is directed to computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon for performing a method of facilitating communications between an initiator and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”). *See Specification*, ¶ [0013] and ¶ [0041]. The method includes receiving a request to initiate the communication from the initiator. *See Specification*, ¶ [0128] and FIG. 12. The method further includes providing a profiles database that stores a set of attributes associated with one or more of a plurality of agents and extracting source information from the request. *See Specification*, ¶ [0129] and FIG. 12. The source information is then referenced against the profiles database to identify an agent from the plurality of agents to facilitate the communication and the communication is directed to the identified agent who may then facilitate the call between the initiator and the desired recipient. *See Specification*, ¶ [0131] and FIG. 12.

B. Independent Claim 25

Claim 25 is directed to a method for establishing a communications link between a set of persons with an intermediary agent facilitator in a hub-and-spoke format, where the agent is the hub and set persons are the spokes. *See Specification*, ¶ [0013] and ¶ [0041]. The method includes receiving a request to establish the communications link between the set of persons, wherein the request is to be directed to one of a plurality of receiving components and

identifying one of the plurality of receiving components to satisfy the request. *See Specification*, ¶ [0048] and FIG. 1A. Prior to communicating the request to the identified receiving component, an agent from a plurality of agents is identified to facilitate the communications link. *See Specification*, ¶ [0134]. The specific agent from the plurality of agents is selected based on the set of preferences and the profile data prior to an initiation of the communications request. *See Specification*, ¶¶ [0129]-[0134] and FIG. 12. The request is communicated to the identified receiving component, whereby the request can be routed to the identified agent immediately incident to being received by the receiving component. *See Specification*, ¶ [0049].

C. Independent Claim 28

Claim 28 is directed to a system for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”). *See Specification*, ¶ [0013] and ¶ [0041]. The system includes a preferences database for storing information related to calling preferences of the user and a profiles database for storing a set of attributes associated with a plurality of agents who facilitate calls between parties. *See Specification*, ¶¶ [0129]-[0132] and FIG. 12. In addition, the system includes computer-readable media having computer-useable instructions embodied thereon for referencing the preferences database and the profiles database incident to receiving the communications request to designate an order of one or more of the agents to facilitate the communications request. *See Specification*, ¶ [0132] and FIG. 12.

D. Independent Claim 32

Claim 32 is directed to a method for enabling a deaf or hard-of-hearing person to communicate with another person over a communications network via a communications link by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”). *See Specification*, ¶ [0013] and ¶ [0041]. The method includes receiving a request to establish the communications link between a user and a desired recipient, wherein at least one of the user and the desired recipient is deaf or hard-of-hearing. *See Specification*, ¶ [0130]. Additionally, the method includes monitoring a plurality of agents who may facilitate the communications request by serving as an intermediary and extracting source information from the communications request. The communications request is directed to one or more of the plurality of agents based on the monitoring of the source information. *Specification*, ¶ [0038].

E. Independent Claim 41

Claim 41 is directed to computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon for performing a method of routing a communications request to help facilitate communications between a plurality of users and a plurality of desired recipients by making use of a plurality of intermediary agents (“agents”). *Specification*, ¶ [0013] and ¶ [0041]. The method includes providing a preferences database that contains a plurality of entries associated with the plurality of users and a profiles database that contains a plurality of entries related to a plurality of agents who may respond to the communications request to facilitate the communications between the plurality of users and the plurality of desired recipients. *Specification*, ¶¶ [0131]-[0132]. Users are matched to the agents based on a comparison between the entries of the preferences database and the entries of the profile database. *Specification*, ¶ [0132].

F. Claim 9

Claim 9 is directed to the media of claim 8. Receiving the request further includes receiving the request through a communications network, the communications network including a voice network, data network, or video network. *Specification*, ¶ [0039] and FIG. 1A.

G. Claim 10

Claim 10 is directed to the media of claim 9. The set of attributes further includes one or more of a language proficiency, a gender, a speaking rate, a speaking style, a typing speed, and a desired attribute. *Specification*, ¶ [0129].

H. Claim 11

Claim 11 is directed to the media of claim 10. The source information further includes one or more of an indication of a source of the request, an Internet Protocol (IP) address, a message-request type, a message-request length, a request identifier, an information digit pair, an indication of a calling number from which the request originated, an indication of a called number to which the request was made, an X.25 label, an objects count, and a digit-parameter object. *Specification*, ¶ [0127] and Table V.

I. Claim 12

Claim 12 is directed to the media of claim 11. Directing the communications to the identified agent further includes placing the request in a queue based on the referencing. *Specification*, ¶ [0079] and FIG. 9.

J. Claim 17

Claim 17 is directed to the method of claim 16. Routing the communications request to a specific agent further includes identifying the specific agent prior to when the routing requests reach a telephony server, thereby substantially eliminating any delay between receiving the

communications request at the telephony server and directing the request to the identified agent. *Specification*, ¶ [0134].

K. Claim 26

Claim 26 is directed to the method of claim 25. The one of a plurality of receiving components further includes one or a plurality of call centers. *Specification*, ¶ [0005] and FIG. 1A.

L. Claim 27

Claim 27 is directed to the method of claim 26. Identifying an agent includes retrieving a set of attributes associated with a calling source prior to connecting a call by the calling source to the agent and retrieving profile data related to the plurality of agents prior to connecting the call to one of a plurality of agents. *Specification*, ¶ [0131].

M. Claim 29

Claim 29 is directed to the system of claim 28. The computer-usable instructions further include instructions to extract signaling information from the communications request. *Specification*, ¶ [0131].

N. Claim 30

Claim 30 is directed to the system of claim 29. The signaling information identifies a source and destination of the communication request. *Specification*, ¶ [0131].

O. Claim 31

Claim 31 is directed to the system of claim 30. The order of the one or more agents includes a single agent best equipped to facilitate the communications request. *Specification*, ¶ [0132].

P. Claim 33

Claim 33 is directed to the method of claim 32. The request is received by a telephone network or a data network, including the internet. *Specification*, ¶ [0038] and FIG. 1A.

Q. Claim 34

Claim 34 is directed to the method of claim 33. The monitoring of the plurality of agents further includes persistently observing the availability of the plurality of agents. *Specification*, ¶ [0012] and ¶ [0059].

R. Claim 35

Claim 35 is directed to the method of claim 34. The monitoring of the plurality of agents further includes persistently observing a plurality of attributes related to the agents. *Specification*, ¶ [0012] and ¶ [0059].

S. Claim 36

Claim 36 is directed to the method of claim 34. The extracting of source information from the communications request includes extracting signaling information. *Specification*, ¶ [0131].

T. Claim 37

Claim 37 is directed to the method of claim 36. The signaling information includes Signaling System 7 (SS7) information. *Specification*, ¶ [0131].

U. Claim 38

Claim 38 is directed to the method of claim 37. The directing of the communications request to one or more of the plurality of agents includes directing the communications request to be placed in a queue to be received by one of the plurality of agents. *Specification*, ¶ [0079] and FIG. 9.

VIII. GROUNDS OF REJECTIONS TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

The following recites each ground of rejection presented herein for review by the Board:

1. Whether claims 8-12, 17, and 25-38, and 41 are anticipated by US Patent Application, Publication No. US 2006/0026001A1 to Bravin et al. (hereinafter “Bravin”) under 35 U.S.C. 102(e).

IX. ARGUMENT

A. Rejection of Claims 8-12, 17, and 25-38, and 41 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) in light of US Patent Application 2006/0026001 to Bravin et al, the Office has failed to show that Bravin discloses each and every element of claims 8-12, 17, and 25-38, and 41.

“A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” MPEP § 2131.

“The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim.”

Id. Further, the “elements must be arranged as required by the claim, but this is not an ipsissimis verbis tests, i.e., identity of terminology is not required.” *Id.*

Claim 8

1. *Bravin does not disclose the features of “providing a profiles database that stores a set of attributes associated with one or more of a plurality of agents” and “referencing said source information against said profiles database to identify one of said plurality of agents to facilitate said communication” as recited in the claim.*

Bravin does not disclose the feature of “providing a profiles database that stores a set of attributes associated with one or more of a plurality of agents” as recited in independent claim 8. The Office states that “Bravin does disclose providing a profiles database (e.g., database of languages in which each relay interpreter is skilled in) that stores a set of attributes (e.g., language skills) associated with one or more of a plurality of agents (See Fig. 2 and interpreter/relay interpreter 21).” *Advisory Action*, Page 2, ¶ 4. In reference to Fig. 2, Bravin states that the video communications relay service (VRS) center has “a relay interpreter 21, such as a video interpreter.” *Bravin*, p. 2, ¶ [0024]. However, the Applicants cannot find in the Specification where Bravin discloses that relay interpreter 21 includes “a database of languages in which each relay interpreter is skilled in.” Bravin does disclose retrieving profile data for a subscriber such as a deaf party, but storing a set of attributes in a profiles database for a plurality

of agents is not disclosed. *See, Bravin*, p. 2, ¶ [0010]. Therefore, Bravin also does not disclose “referencing said source information against said profiles database to identify one of said plurality of agents to facilitate said communication” as recited by independent claim 8.

Claim 17

1. *Bravin does not disclose the feature of “wherein routing said communications request to a specific agent includes identifying said specific agent prior to when said routing request reaches a telephony server, thereby substantially eliminating any delay between receiving said communications request at said telephony server and directing said request to said identified agent” as recited in the claim.*

In the Final Office Action, the Office cited Bravin page 6, paragraph [0050] in reference to this feature. In this citation, Bravin discloses enabling a deaf party to preselect a greeting before being connected with a relay interpreter. Bravin also discloses that “the VRS is enabled to select the relay interpreter that best meets the needs of the subscriber for the particular video call.” Bravin does not disclose “identifying the specific agent prior to when the routing requests reach a telephony server” [emphasis added] as recited by claim 17. This fact is supported by Bravin’s statement that “if the phone number of the hearing party is in the look-up table for the deaf party, then a preferred language can be retrieved and a relay interpreter for the preferred language can be selected.” To perform this step, both the hearing party and the deaf party have to be identified, thus the request must have already been received at the VRS. Bravin therefore discloses selecting the interpreter after the request reaches the server.

In response to this argument, the Office stated that Bravin discloses that “**Prior** to relay interpreter 21 answering the call, the inbound phone number of party 13 is retrieved by caller ID...This retrieved phone number can be used to associate a subscriber profile on VRS 19 with the caller...Once the subscriber is determined, the associated subscriber profile is retrieved

from profile server 55 and displayed to the relay interpreter of the preferred language of the caller.” *Advisory Action*, page 3, ¶ 5. Just because the relay interpreter has not answered the call does not mean that the call request has not been processed by the telephony server. This fact is further supported by the following disclosure:

This retrieval function can be accomplished by profile server 55. Once the subscriber is determined, the associated subscriber profile is retrieved from profile server 55 and displayed to the relay interpreter 21. Advantageously, the data populated in the look-up table fields can inform the relay interpreter of the preferred language of the caller. *Bravin*, Page 6, ¶ [0051].

This establishes that the call request has already reached the VRS, which is after the telephony server and where the relay interpreter is located. *See, e.g., Bravin*, FIG. 2, FIG. 4A, FIG. 5. Therefore, Bravin discloses that the request is processed after it has reached the telephony server. For at least this reason, Bravin does not describe, either expressly or inherently, each and every element of independent claim 17. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) rejection of this claim is respectfully requested.

Claim 25

1. *Bravin does not disclose the feature of “establishing a communications link between a set of persons with an intermediary agent facilitator in a hub-and-spoke format, where the agent is the hub and set of persons are the spokes” as recited in the claim.*

Bravin does not disclose “establishing a communications link between a set of persons with an intermediary agent facilitator in a hub-and-spoke format, where the agent is the hub and set of persons are the spokes” as recited by the claim. The Office has not cited where they believe Bravin discloses this element, and the Applicants cannot find this element disclosed in Bravin.

2. *Bravin does not disclose the features of “receiving a request to establish said communications link between said set of persons, wherein said request is to*

be directed to one of a plurality of receiving components” and “identifying one of said plurality of receiving components to satisfy said request” as recited in the claim.

The Office has not shown, and Applicants have been unable to find, disclosure in Bravin of the following feature: “receiving a request to establish said communications link between said set of persons, wherein said request is to be directed to one of a plurality of receiving components” as recited by claim 25. Bravin does disclose having a single “video communications relay center” where the systems disclosed by Bravin are housed, but Bravin never discloses having a plurality of such centers and having to identify which of the rely centers to route a request as required by independent claim 25. *See, e.g., Bravin*, p. 3, ¶ [0027]. Additionally, FIGS. 2 , 4A, and 5 of Bravin denote only one such video communications rely center.

3. *Bravin does not disclose the feature “communicating said request to said identified receiving component, whereby said request can be routed to said identified agent immediately incident to being received by said receiving component” of as recited in the claim.*

Bravin does not disclose “communicating said request to said identified receiving component, whereby said request can be routed to said identified agent immediately incident to being received by said receiving component” as recited by claim 25. Furthermore, the Office has never shown where Bravin discloses this feature and the Applicants cannot find this feature in Bravin.

4. *Bravin does not disclose the feature of “selecting a specific agent from said plurality of agents based on said set of preferences and profile data prior to initiation of said communications request” as recited in the claim.*

Bravin does not disclose “selecting a specific agent from said plurality of agents based on said set of preferences and profile data prior to initiation of said communications

request”. As previously established with regard to claim 17, Bravin discloses selecting a relay interpreter only after a communications request is initiated.

For at least these reasons, Bravin does not disclose every element of claim 25. Therefore, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) rejections of this claim and its corresponding dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Claim 28

1. *Bravin does not disclose the feature of “a profiles database for storing a set of attributes associated with a plurality of agents who facilitate calls between parties” as recited in the claim.*

As shown previously with respect to independent claim 8, Bravin does not disclose “a profiles database for storing a set of attributes associated with a plurality of agents who facilitate calls between parties” as recited by independent claim 28. The Office has not provided an explanation of where Bravin discloses the specific elements of claim 28. Bravin does disclose retrieving profile data for a deaf party (the initiator), but storing a set of attributes in a profiles database for a plurality of agents is not disclosed. *See, e.g., Bravin*, p. 2, ¶ [0010].

2. *Bravin does not disclose the feature of “one or more computer-readable media having computer-useable instructions embodied thereon for referencing said preferences database and said profiles database incident to receiving said communications request to designate an order of one or more of said agents to facilitate said communications request” as recited in the claim.*

The Office has also not shown where Bravin discloses “one or more computer-readable media having computer-useable instructions embodied thereon for referencing said preferences database and said profiles database incident to receiving said communications request to designate an order of one or more of said agents to facilitate said communications request”. Furthermore, Applicants cannot find such a feature disclosed in Bravin. As previously established with regard to claims 17 and 25, Bravin discloses selecting a relay interpreter only

after a communications request is initiated. Therefore, Bravin also does not disclose designating an order of one or more agents to facilitate a communications request prior to receiving the communications request.

For at least these reasons, Bravin does not disclose every element of claim 28. Therefore, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) rejections of this claim and its corresponding dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Claim 32

1. *Bravin does not disclose the features of “monitoring a plurality of agents who may facilitate said communications request by serving as an intermediary” and “based on said monitoring and said source information, directing said communications request to one or more of said plurality of agents” as recited in the claim.*

In the Advisory Action, the Office states that “Bravin does disclose monitoring (for example, ‘monitoring’ may simply be the system maintaining a database/list of a plurality of relay interpreters, and the particular language in which each relay interpreter is skilled in).”

Advisory Action, page 4, ¶ 7. The citation to Bravin referenced by the Office, Bravin, page 6, [0050], does not disclose maintaining such a list. Furthermore, the Applicants cannot find any such disclosure in Bravin.

As such, Bravin also does not disclose “based on said monitoring and said source information, directing said communications request to one or more of said plurality of agents” as recited by claim 32. It is respectfully submitted that Bravin fails to describe, either expressly or inherently, each and every element of independent claim 32. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) rejections of this claim and its corresponding dependent claims is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 41

1. *Bravin does not disclose the feature of “providing a profiles database that contains a plurality of entries related to a plurality of agents who may respond to facilitate said communications between said plurality of users and said plurality of desired recipients” as recited in the claim.*

As previously established with regard to independent claims 8 and 28, Bravin does not disclose “providing a profiles database that contains a plurality of entries related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request to facilitate said communications between said plurality of users and said plurality of desired recipients” as recited by claim 41. Bravin discloses the selection of a relay interpreter based on a preferred language of a subscriber, but this is in no way equivalent to maintaining an entire database containing a “plurality of entries” relating to each relay interpreter. As such, it is respectfully submitted that Bravin fails to describe, either expressly or inherently, each and every element of independent claim 41. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) rejection of this claim is therefore respectfully requested.

B. Conclusion

For at least the reasons listed above, claims 8-12, 17, and 25-38, and 41 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices follow.

X. APPENDICES

A. CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A method for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”), the method comprising:

receiving said communications request from a user, wherein said communications request includes a request to ultimately reach said desired recipient;

retrieving a set of preferences associated with said user;

retrieving profile data related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request;

selecting a specific agent from said plurality of agents based on said set of preferences and said profile data, wherein said specific agent possesses attributes consistent with at least a portion of the set of preferences and profile data; and

routing said communications request to said specific agent, who is able to receive said communications request and facilitate said call.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein receiving said communications request includes receiving said requests via a communications network.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said communications network is a telephone network, the Internet, or a private network.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said set of preferences associated with said user includes one or more of the following:

a language preference;

a communications-type preference, wherein said communications-type preference includes a preference to communication via voice, tele-type (TTY) device; or imaging;

a target-destination preference;

a call type;

a communication mode, and

an agent gender.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein retrieving profile data includes retrieving data associated with one or more of the following attributes:

a language proficiency;

a gender;

a speaking rate;

a speaking style;

a typing speed; and

a desired attribute.

6.-7. (cancelled)

8. (Previously presented) One or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon for performing a method of facilitating communications between an initiator and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”), said method comprising:

- receiving a request to initiate said communication from said initiator;
- providing a profiles database that stores a set of attributes associated with one or more of a plurality of agents;
- extracting source information from said request;
- referencing said source information against said profiles database to identify one of said plurality of agents to facilitate said communication; and
- directing said communication to said identified agent who may then facilitate said call between said initiator and said desired recipient.

9. (Original) The media of claim 8, wherein receiving said request includes receiving said request through a communications network, said communications network including a voice network, data network, or video network.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said set of attributes include one or more of the following:

- a language proficiency;
- a gender;
- a speaking rate;
- a speaking style;
- a typing speed; and

a desired attribute.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said source information includes one or more of the following:

- an indication of a source of said request;
- an Internet Protocol (IP) address;
- a message-request type;
- a message-request length;
- a request identifier;
- an information digit pair;
- an indication of a calling number from which the request originated;
- an indication of a called number to which the request was made;
- an X.25 label;
- an objects count; and
- a digit-parameter object.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein directing said communications to said identified agent includes placing said request in a queue based on said referencing.

13. (Previously presented) A method for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”), the method comprising:

receiving said communications request from a user, wherein said communications request includes a request to ultimately reach said desired recipient;

retrieving a set of preferences associated with said user;

retrieving profile data related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request to facilitate communications between said user and said desired recipient; and

routing said communications request to a specific agent, wherein said specific agent possesses attributes consistent with at least a portion of the set of preferences and profile data.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said communications request is to reach a destination address, including an IP address or phone number.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said communications request is a request to establish a communications link between at least two parties,

wherein a human agent is communicatively disposed between said at least two parties and facilitates persistent communication between said at least two parties.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said set of preferences are associated with an origination address of said request, said origination address including an IP address or a phone number.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein routing said communications request to a specific agent includes identifying said specific agent prior to when said routing requests reach a telephony server, thereby substantially eliminating any delay between receiving said communications request at said telephony server and directing said request to said identified agent.

18. (Previously presented) A method for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”) received through a teletype (TTY) device or destined to be communicated through a TTY device comprising:

receiving said communications request from said user, wherein said communications request includes a request to ultimately reach said desired recipient;

retrieving signaling information from said communications request;

receiving profile data related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request to facilitate communications between said user and said desired recipient;

based on said signaling information and said profile data, denoting a hierarchy of one or more of said plurality of agents to facilitate said communications request; and

routing said communications request to at least one of said one or more of said plurality of agents in said hierarchy, who is able to receive said communications request and facilitate said call.

19. (Original) The method claim 18, wherein said communications request is a request received though a telephone network, including a wireless-communications network, to reach a destination address, including an IP address or phone number.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein said signaling information includes packetized machine language messages related to said communications request.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein said signaling information includes a source identifying a source of said communications request.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein said signaling information further includes a target address identifying a dialed number associated with said communications request.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein denoting said hierarchy includes identifying a single best agent to satisfy said communications request.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously presented) A method for establishing a communications link between a set of persons with an intermediary agent facilitator in a hub-and-spoke format, where the agent is the hub and set persons are the spokes, the method comprising:

receiving a request to establish said communications link between said set of persons, wherein said request is to be directed to one of a plurality of receiving components;

identifying one of said plurality of receiving components to satisfy said request;

prior to communicating said request to said identified receiving component, identifying an agent from a plurality of agents to facilitate said communications link;

communicating said request to said identified receiving component, whereby said request can be routed to said identified agent immediately incident to being received by said receiving component; and

selecting a specific agent from said plurality of agents based on said set of preferences and said profile data prior to an initiation of said communications request.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein said one of a plurality of receiving components includes one or a plurality of call centers.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein identifying an agent comprises:

retrieving a set of attributes associated with a calling source prior to connecting a call by said calling source to said agent; and

retrieving profile data related to said plurality of agents prior to connecting said call to one of a plurality of agents.

28. (Previously presented) A system for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between a user and a desired recipient by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”), said system comprising:

a preferences database for storing information related to calling preferences of said user;

a profiles database for storing a set of attributes associated with a plurality of agents who facilitate calls between parties; and

one or more computer-readable media having computer-useable instructions embodied thereon for referencing said preferences database and said profiles database incident to receiving said communications request to designate an order of one or more of said agents to facilitate said communications request.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein said computer-useable instructions include instructions to extract signaling information from said communications request.

30. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein said signaling information identifies a source and a destination of said communications request.

31. (Original) The system of claim 30, said order of one or more of said agents includes a single agent best equipped to facilitate said communications request.

32. (Previously presented) A method for enabling a deaf or hard-of-hearing person to communicate with another person over a communications network via a communications link by making use of an intermediary agent (“agent”), the method comprising:

receiving a request to establish said communications link between a user and a desired recipient, wherein at least one of said user and said desired recipient is deaf or hard-of-hearing;

monitoring a plurality of agents who may facilitate said communications request by serving as an intermediary;

extracting source information from said communications request; and

based on said monitoring and said source information, directing said communications request to one or more of said plurality of agents.

33. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said request is received by a telephone network or data network, including the Internet.

34. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein monitoring said plurality of agents includes persistently observing the availability of said plurality of agents.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein monitoring said plurality of agents further includes persistently observing a plurality of attributes related to said agents.

36. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein extracting source information from said communications request includes extracting signaling information.

37. (Original) The method of claim 36, wherein said signaling information includes Signaling System 7 (SS7) information.

38. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein directing said communications request to one or more of said plurality of agents includes directing said communications request to be placed in a queue to be received by one or said plurality of agents.

39. (Previously presented) A method for routing a communications request to help facilitate a call between an initiator and a desired recipient by making use of a plurality of intermediary agents (“agents”), the method comprising;

retrieving a set of preferences associated with said initiator of said communications request;

retrieving profile data related to said plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request; and

matching said initiator to one or more of said agents based on a relationship between said set of preferences and said profile data, wherein said one or more of said agents have attributes consistent with at least a portion of said set of preferences and profile data.

40. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein matching said initiator to one or more of said agents includes comparing said set of preferences with said profile data and determining similarities between said preferences and said profile data.

41. (Previously presented) One or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon for performing a method of routing a communications request to help facilitate communications between a plurality of users and a plurality of desired recipients by making use of a plurality of intermediary agents (“agents”), said method comprising:

providing a preferences database that contains a plurality of entries associated with said plurality of users;

providing a profiles database that contains a plurality of entries related to a plurality of agents who may respond to said communications request to facilitate said communications between said plurality of users and said plurality of desired recipients; and

matching said users to said agents based on a comparison between said entries of said preferences database and said entries of said profile database.

B. EVIDENCE

None.

C. RELATED-PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.